The Interspecies Newsletter

Spring 2002

Published Quarterly by Interspecies Communication Inc.

Getting the Word Out

Interspecies has recently initiated a project with the ambitious goal of weakening the Japanese whaling industry. Hopefully, this effort will impact the horrific dolphin drive fishery as well.

What's a drive fishery? A former colleague of mine, an American dolphin researcher, recently received a grant from the Sony Corporation to set up a dolphin healing program in Micronesia. It was instigated by Sony's chairman who has a grandson with autism. Some believe that swimming with captive dolphins provides good therapy for autistic children. Sounds positive so far.

Unbeknownst to the researcher, the program's Japanese director got his dolphins by hiring a drive fishery company in the Japanese village of Taiji. They soon succeeded to capture about 100 bottlenose dolphins. Five young animals were kept alive for shipment to Palau, while the rest were slaughtered under the pretense that culling dolphins protects coastal areas that have been drastically over-fished by humans. The dolphin meat was sold locally, with no attempt being made to alert consumers about a recent study indicating that heavy metal concentrations in dolphin tissue exceeds, *by up to 1000 times*, the maximum amount permitted for sale under Japanese law.

Drive fisheries account for up to 20,000 dolphin deaths each year within Japan. They are sanctioned by the government although they are unregulated, unsustainable, and breathtakingly cruel. Most Japanese seem unaware that the fishery exists, or that the meat sits in supermarkets as a supplement to whale meat. It's not unusual that dolphin meat is mislabeled as whale meat.

Obviously, our plan to impact both industrial whaling and the drive fisheries is a monumental undertaking. It demands access to deep pockets, a keen appreciation for the machinations of international law, and a firm grasp of the labyrinth of Japanese culture. What Interspecies brings to the table is expertise promoting coexistence with cetaceans, a fair understanding of the inscrutable relationship between cause and effect that drives Japanese society, and a Buddhist optimism that believes compassion merged with community-building provides strong medicine for treating environmentally violent behavior.

間日本人

Aida Nihonjin:
Between
Japanese People
and

協調

Kyouchou
Of Harmony

今年

Kotoshi:
this year

解決

Kaiketsu:
A solution

Our own meager resources do not inspire the kind of international campaign needed to carry out this ambitious task. Fully recognizing our limitations, we enter the ring anyway, enthusiastic to attempt a strategy never tried before by the Western activist community, after 25 years spent fighting the Japanese over whaling.

What's the plan? We think it's time the Japanese people heard for themselves all sides of this charged issue. We feel confident that once they know how this issue affects them as individuals and as a society, they will learn to protect the last living whales and dolphins as much as the rest of the world now does.

How is possible that they don't know what's going on? It's a complex situation. One problem is that their own government keeps its thumb on their own media more than occurs in the USA or Europe. This has kept the japanese citizenry outside the loop. It's strange but true that news stories the rest of us read so often about the open sore of Japanese whaling, are almost never published in the Japanese media.

Ironically, the so-called "whaling problem" that the Western world knows so well, is perceived within Japan as something quite different: a problem of western activists continually undermining Japanese culture and economy. Given the notable restraints over public access to information imposed by the government's Fisheries Ministry in cahoots with the whaling industry, there has never been accurate reportage of this issue within Japan. Instead, the Japanese people have been counseled to regard western anti-whaling activism as primarily expressing anti-Japanese sentiments.

In other words, why won't those Western bigots stop hammering on our poor whalers who are simply trying to make an honest living.

It would be a mistake to regard this perceived bigotry as nothing besides the creepy effect of a cynical propaganda campaign. Japan is as much a tribal culture as a modern nation. Unlike in the US where national loyalties are tenuously established on abstractions like patriotism or even sports, a hundred million Japanese base their loyalties to one another on blood, extended family, and culture.

A tribal loyalty regards the common social fabric at risk whenever members of the tribe are targeted from abroad. It's the same loyalty that prompts Arab countries to support the Palestinian cause.

When outsiders attack whalers, the negative psychological residue affects every Japanese citizen. Whatever the cause for the attack – whether it's just, moral, or ecological – it always gets lost in the 'form' of attack. While Western cultures tend to place more overt attention on content over form, it's the opposite in Japan. Reams of content presented by Western activists over the years, depict the whaling industry as profoundly anti-ecological in their killing spree against endangered species. But this essential point always gets drowned out by the format of the presentation. No one hears the words above the loud clatter of a blatant attack on one of their own?

All the expensive media events staged again and again over the past twenty years by the likes of Greenpeace, IFAW, WWF, and Sea Shepard can be strategically categorized as anti-whaling; *against* whaling and whalers. Yet despite decades of anti-whaling protest, the killing ships still leave port on time. The anti-whaling forces have failed, utterly, perhaps best demonstrated by the latest news from Japan that the industry is now proposing to extend the hunt to include endangered sei whales. This failure assures that pilot whales and several other dolphin species continue to be corralled and slaughtered at the well-established drive fisheries in Futo and Taiji.

There is much evidence that shows the prevailing, Western anti-whaling strategy mostly prompts the whale and dolphin killers to dig in their heels. It's what the Japanese do whenever they need to save face. The Japanese media refuses to report the slander. And years of anti-whaling media events and full page ads in Western newspapers, rarely reaches anyone who isn't already converted.

Why would all these anti-whaling organizations keep raising millions of membership dollars to produce media events that get covered voluminously in the USA and Europe but which rarely receive coverage within the Japanese media? A cynic might conclude that the anti-whaling strategy primarily targets people in the US, Europe, and Australia who keep supporting their favorite organization. Unwilling, (or perhaps unaware) to thoroughly analyze the chess game of Japanese culture, anti-whaling strategists are living in denial, often measuring success by the incredible support they arouse at home, while never reporting their failure to impact whaling.

協

Kyoudou:
collaboration

同

When and Where

The next battle in the war to protect the sei whales, the pilot whales, and every other species of cetacean, will take place at the upcoming meeting of the International Whaling Commission, May 20-25, in Shimonoseki Japan.

Interspecies president Jim Nollman will attend the meeting, with the status of a non-governmental organization (NGO) observer. The grant proposal to assure his participation was written by Courtney Vail of the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS). Primary funding arrived from Christine Stevens of The Animal Welfare Institute (AWI), with matching funds provided by a few IC members.

We thank you for your support.

The Biz

Given this sad background to the situation, it seems an anomaly to report that whaling has not prospered in Japan over the past decade. The industry would have gone bankrupt long ago if not for a substantial government subsidy. How could it possibly thrive? Whale populations are egregiously depleted in every ocean. This reality puts the price of whale meat – once common fare – into the class of truffles and caviar, but without the historical gourmet dividend. A growing percentage of young Japanese have never even tasted it. The whaling industry is now responding to this latter issue by lobbying the government to add whale meat to the nationally subsidized school lunch program.

Whaling survives today despite unrelenting pressure placed on the industry by anti-whaling activists and their millions of followers. It survives despite boycotts, hate mail, red paint thrown at delegates. It survives despite the openly fraudulent scam of "scientific whaling", which is universally condemned by the international marine mammal science community as producing nothing of scientific value, although it certainly provides a legal loophole for keeping whale meat on Japanese grocery shelves. Whaling survives despite the ongoing humiliation faced by its citizens who remain unwitting collaborators in this thuggish and morally indefensible business.

Whaling survives despite its violation of the U.S. Pelly amendment which was passed by congress to provide penalties for any nation trafficking in endangered species. Many whaling activists believe that if the U.S. would simply uphold its own law, the loss in revenue to Japanese corporations, would quickly end industrial whaling forever. That the U.S. fails to invoke the Pelly amendment against Japan may also be regarded as the almost inconceivable success of a lone lobbyist named Alan McNabb who represents the Japanese whaling industry in Washington DC.

死

Shi In
The Cause of Death

因

The other voting nations within the IWC do their best to hold the line against the Japanese whaling industry. Delegates commonly vote as a bloc to impose restrictions that, if not passed, would have, by now, rung the death knell on several great whale species.

It's common knowledge that the Japanese Foreign Ministry counters this Western bloc by granting aid packages to several small Caribbean countries with the surreptitious stipulation that they join the IWC to vote with the Japanese. One savvy consultant informs me that this strategy may be on the verge of succeeding. At the upcoming meeting, Japan appears to have enough votes to pass a resolution permitting them to target endangered sei whales.

Some observers describe the whaling industry as operating like the Mafia. If there is a difference, it is that that this organized crime is pro-actively sponsored by the second wealthiest economy in the world.

Mercury

Whaling survives despite an ominous new study conducted by independent laboratories operating both inside and outside Japan. They conclude that people who eat whale meat are being slowly poisoned by mercury. The Japanese know the effects of mercury poisoning better than anyone else, as a result of the catastrophic epidemic that killed so many fish eaters at Minamata Bay.

Publicizing this mercury issue could potentially exert an effect within Japan similar to the effect the fur fashion ban in Europe had on ending the baby harp seal industry. But given the reputation of anti-whaling activists, there is real concern that if the wrong groups promote this information, it will get construed as just another anti-Japanese campaign. One might conclude that an anti-whaling-directed, Japanese publicity campaign is an oxymoron.

Interspecies is involved because of our many years working directly with both Japanese ecology activists and the Japanese media. We are providing strategic and networking expertise to assure that this information gets maximum coverage *within* Japan.

The Japan Times is the foremost English language newspaper in Tokyo. They reported about mercury in whale meat as far back as 1999. Here's what they wrote:

Is it whale meat? Or isn't it? However, you define it, it's definitely toxic. Go ahead, eat what your grocer calls "whale". Meat, skin, blubber, internal organs, it's all are for sale in Japan. But why do they sell it? They don't permit the sale of sashimi taken from Tokyo's rivers. Or shellfish from Minamata Bay.

So steer clear of whale: There's a good chance its toxic. And it might not even be "whale". According to the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society of Britain, recent research provides "overwhelming and alarming evidence that Japanese consumers who believe they are buying whale meat are being tricked into consuming dolphin and porpoise meat that is so contaminated that it is unfit for human consumption.

Earlier this year, scientists did genetic and toxicological analysis studies on over 100 samples of 'whale' purchased in six locations across Japan. They found that 25 percent were mislabeled: from or containing a different species to the one offered for sale. Of the mislabeled samples 50 percent were identified as derived from small cetaceans, or dolphins, porpoises and small whales, commonly caught in Japanese coastal waters. DNA testing also confirmed that two of the samples were humpback whale and two were sperm whale, both protected, endangered species. One of the humpback specimens, sold in Ayukawa, Miyagi Prefecture, was advertised as "minke whale from Japan's scientific whaling program". The Far Seas Fisheries Division of the Fisheries Agency insists whalers are not killing protected species. They claim that either the testing was faulty, or the whale was killed before the ban (36 years ago) and refrigerated.

Tetsuyo Endoh, a heavy metals specialist at the Health Science University of Hokkaido, found one sample of dolphin liver, sold as pilot whale, contained 203ppm of mercury. Provisional safety standards for seafood, set in 1972 by the Ministry of Health, call for a maximum of 0.4 ppm. Dr Koiichi Haraguchi tested the samples for organochlorines and found that even southern minke whale samples from Antarctica had "much higher concentrations of agro-chemicals such as DDT than levels in squid and tuna that sparked past controversies.

Concern about toxins in whales is not new. After a study by the US National Institute of Health, authorities on the Faroe Islands issued this health warning last year: "Girls and women should not eat whale blubber until they have given birth to all their children. The livers and kidneys should not be eaten at all."

A spokesperson at the Japanese Ministry of Health said contaminated and mislabeled products can be confiscated by local authorities. Selling dolphin as whale is false labeling, a violation of the Food Hygiene law.

A Fisheries Agency spokesperson denied this. "All cetaceans can be sold as 'whale'", he said. The scam, of course, is that when Japanese buy whale, they are expecting minke whale, not dolphin or porpoise. Asked about toxins, the Fisheries spokesperson replied, "We don't say whale meat is a healthy food. We say its nutritious". I'm reassured. How about you?

Divide and Conquer

Some activists express dismay about the IWC "culture". That the past few sessions have occurred in places like Monte Carlo and Puerto Vallarta, should hint that this event is a moveable feast that offers a notable perk on every delegate's annual calendar. What do these delegates do at the session? They represent governments to propose, lobby and vote, for or against, quotas and regulations.

Within the thick stew of the IWC sessions, NGO activists are only permitted to sit on the sidelines and observe. Outside the hall, they scheme, lobby, and hold court with the media. But they are as much a part of the culture as the delegates and some depict the GOs and the NGOs as mirror images of one another, each adhering to predictable roles within the culture.

Some of the larger activist groups send eight or more observers. Since none of them get to speak at the sessions, one may question why every group needs to send so many of their own watchdogs to accomplish the same task as every other group's watchdogs. One old-timer believes it's mostly an issue of branding. "Imagine the effect on next year's fundraising campaign if the brand called IFAW told its members they'd decided to stay home because the watchdogs from the brand called WWF are doing the job just fine."

愛用

Aiyou Suru: To Use Habitually

する

Caught in an endless game of fighting for the same pool of limited membership dollars, the NGOs have never been in the business of trusting one another. A certain insecurity infects the observer's section whenever a specific NGOs gets its name associated with any small success within the larger venue. Lest we forget what this all about, history assures us that these vastly-overrated successes are usually no success at all from the whale's point of view.

Tragically, the NGOs brand-name paranoia upholds a failure of community. Should an unaffiliated person introduce one good idea that demands the support of several groups, it would likely never happen. But next year, it's likely that each NGO would display its own independent variation of that one good idea, essentially diluting the potency of every potential strategy that relies on a unified effort. Apparently, it is never been obvious to these activist groups that a unified front aids whales far better than the current divisiveness.

With that in mind, our same IWC old-timer has warned us against sharing any good ideas with the NGO collective. He writes:

"I strongly suggest NOT embarking on a project to 'educate' the large anti-whaling organizations about the value of pro-whale versus anti-whaling if you value your time and sanity. These folks truly believe that whatever course they are already taking is the best one. Misplaced devotion to their own momentum makes it an ongoing struggle for anyone attempting to unify these groups. Concentrate instead on who you really want to reach: the Japanese public."

In fairness, another consultant applauds the NGOs, especially their tactic of sending lots of people to the convention. "It's all we have to stop the whalers. And certainly, they provide a talented pool of lobbyists."

One might wonder just whom these NGO reps are lobbying, since the majority of them are construed as bigoted enemies by the Japanese

依存する教育

Izon Suru Kyouiku
To Depend on Education

whaling industry. Their real role is analogous to the trainers at a prize fight. They sit at ringside, massaging the necks of whale-friendly delegates who otherwise get so discouraged by the thuggish Japanese tactics.

Now that the Japanese delegates so blatantly break the rules voted in by this international regulatory body, the trainors metaphor seems both more futile and more necessary.

Reincarnation

Allow a personal anecdote by me. I am Interspecies director, Jim Nollman.

I last attended an IWC meeting in 1981; a special session focused on the subject of "WhalesAlive".

In that year, the activist community was feeling like a conquering army. Whaling seemed on the way out as resolutions were proposed to place both the Indian ocean and the Antarctic coast off-limits to the depleted whaling industry. The conference, itself, seemed to indicate that the role of IWC would soon be altered to govern such benign activities as whalewatching, dolphin swimming, and research.

With the Commission poised to debate the "take" of small cetaceans worldwide, it was deemed appropriate that I read a paper to the convention concerning my two-winter experience trying to stop the dolphin drive fishery at Iki Island, Japan.

Midway through a presentation peppered with mortality rates and marketing ploys, I tried to explain why Japanese fishermen seemed to display so little compassion for endangered species. I described a hunch of mine. Because Asian cultures are steeped in the spiritual precept of reincarnation, they may not perceive extinction with quite the same sense of finality we in the West give to it.

At that moment, the Japanese delegates in the hall started booing, which prompted their spokesperson to rise to demand that the chairman get me off the podium. The chairman was a avuncular Englishman with a long history of fighting the Japanese. He stared at me exasperated, then asked politely that I keep my remarks focused on the stated theme, which was why the Japanese are conducting a drive fishery.

I looked at him, feeling duly intimidated, then stuttered that I *was* focused on the subject.

I continued, offering a description of a stone memorial placed at the site where the Iki fishermen conducted their bloody slaughter. The inscription begged the spirits of the slain dolphins to forgive the injustice done to them. When I asked a local fishermen what he thought it meant, he answered that some of the slaughtered dolphins would be reincarnated as fishermen, and vice versa.

The inscription made sense when placed within the context of the ancient nature religion of Shinto.

The entire Japanese delegation rose to its feet to start hooting again. The chairman scolded me fiercely, then demanded that I leave the podium. I complied without a fight.

Community Building

The Interspecies newsletter is now in its 24th year of publication. As our readers know, over the past ten years Interspecies has co-produced many pro-whale events in Japan. Working closely with the well-established ICERC network, Interspecies has drawn upon significant Japanese resources to establish a platform that is not explicitly against whaling or whalers, but for living whales. This so-called Pro-whale strategy borrows much from that old IWC catchphrase: "WhalesAlive".

Pro-whale is different from anti-whaling. Pro-whale never mentions whaling. Pro-whale focuses instead on the sheer exuberance and beauty of whales. Pro-whale doesn't target the Japanese whaling industry because such a strategy would shut us out of the only place our message needs to be heard. Pro-whale focuses instead on the daily struggle cetaceans face to survive in a human-overpopulated world.

Unlike the Western activist community which relies equally on science and proselytizing to spread its message, pro-whale prefers a message that subtley includes the spritual element of the human relationship to cetaceans. Pro-whale promotes a reverence for life in the oceans.

Interspecies foremost pro-whale collaborator, is the Japanese ICERC network. With no capability to effectively protest against whaling within the Japanese system, ICERC uses its significant resoruces to sponsor whale research as well as an ongoing series of wildly successful whale conferences. ICERC also promotes the use of living whale and dolphin images in advertising. Most significantly, it nurtures financial support from several mainstream Japanese corporations, including Casio and Fujifilm.

ICERC and Interspecies share the same goal of fostering a transformation of attitudes among the Japanese populace regarding their industry's dangerously accelerated exploitation of whales and dolphins. To further this goal, ICERC has developed a fruitful relationship with Japanese media. Over the past ten years, ICERC has placed Jim Nollman's interspecies message in thirty or more mainstream Japanese publications. He has emerged as a recognizable face, supporting emergent whalewatching centers all around the country.

The UK based foundation, WDCS, recognizes the power of this collaboration and its pro-whale message. WDCS has devoted significant resources towards supporting a few other NGOs and individuals working within Japan to highlight concerns over the public consumption of whale meat. Most significantly, they support the Japanese NGO known as Safety First, which is promoting the key issue of mercury in whale meat.

Which Is It?

The annual IWC meeting is one of the biggest events on every whale activist's calendar, and all of the major western activist groups will be represented. Because the upcoming meeting takes place in Japan, Interspecies is being asked to coordinate a coalition that will include pro-whale activists from the Japanese ICERC network, as well as a cadre of experienced activists from the WDCS network. We have recently involved several media consultants with specific experise in cause-based advertising.

The objective is this. we want to design an ad campaign that alerts the Japanese people to the real and dire threat posed by mercury toxins in their whale meat.

Is it pro-whale? Not precisely. Is it anti-whaling. Not at all, in fact to succeed it must never mention the whaling industry. It focuses instead on people. Entirely on people. People at risk for ingesting poison. Keep tuned.

Throw us your support if you can. We need all the help we can get.

Beluga Update

Last July, Interspecies sent two emissaries to the Russian White Sea. It was our third summer producing a sophisticated and increasingly distinguished beluga whale project that combines preservation through economic development, as well as communication research. Consulting with Finnish activists and media, as well as with Russian biologists, politicians, and entrepreneurs, our efforts are definitely starting to pay off.

Last summer, several busloads of Scandinavian whale watchers brought the first glimmer of an economy based on a healthy whale population to this severely depressed part of the Russia. Last fall, Interspecies Finnish rep, Rauno Lauhakangas, successfully introduced a "whale tax" to the tour operators, which will pay for a modest tourist facility, providing a prototype for shore-based whale watching. The idea is to eliminate the harassment that ultimately accompanies boat-based whale watching wherever it exists.

Our working relationship with the young acousticians of Moscow's prestigious Shirshov Institute also blossomed. While we introduced them to the incredible new computer tools that permit onsite analysis of beluga calls, they provided us with recordings they believe demonstrates a rudimentary language based on echolocation. This collaborative research was documented last summer in Finnish and Russian TV, as well as in a feature article published in the FinnAir inflight magazine.

But things can often change quickly in Russia where the depth of the corruption is often breath taking to behold. Two years ago, two adolescent whales from the local population were captured and shipped to an oceanarium in Canada. Last fall we were shocked to learn that the previously unidentified businessman in charge was none other than the emeritus director of whale research at Shirshov. Now he is busy building a permanent cage on the whale feeding grounds to facilitate future captures.

This setback was soon followed by news of Russian marine mammal decree #1551, which sets a kill quota of 50 whales per year "for aboriginal consumption". Because there are no aboriginal people living anywhere near the White Sea, the decree actually opens the door for local sportsmen to hunt the whales, with the meat potentially exported to Japan.

Another decree item is clearly aimed at the incipient tourist initiative. It forbids unauthorized foreigners from walking or boating near the whale grounds. As if that's not enough, in a transparent attempt to ban Interspecies' collaboration with other Russian researchers, the decree forbids unauthorized foreigners from either anchoring boats or bringing electronics onto the island. As Rauno has commented, the decree provides an ominous historical context to Interspecies' efforts.

We remain committed to these whales, and will continue building on the considerable momentum already

危機

Kiki: Crisis

danger + opportunity

generated by our activities. Hundreds of Scandinavian tourists are slated to arrive on the island this summer, and many local businesses in the Russian republics of Karelia and Archangelsk have been established to accommodate them.

As is often the case in the "new Russia", the challenge is getting these remote republics to thwart what has historically been Moscow's role of pillaging the outlying regions. We are optimistic that the local people will not sit idly by to let this misbegotten decree destroy the nascent opportunity we present to improve their lives and protect their ecosystem.

Obviously, the unfriendly terms of the decree suggests it's not a good idea for Interspecies to send researchers to the White Sea this summer. The political urgency remains however, and it has motivated us to shift our attention away from acoustic research in favor of pro-whale activism.

Rauno and Jim have successfully galvanized the European activist community to the plight of these last beluga whales in Europe. While Rauno has initiated a Russian letter-writing campaign, Jim has provided members of the IWC's scientific committee with info that disputes the bogus "aboriginal" focus of the decree. In July, the two Interspecies reps may travel to cities in Karelia and Archangelsk to meet with officials and the media, promoting the considerable economic opportunity presented by the living beluga whales of the White Sea.

The Azores

Five years ago this newsletter published an article describing the mystery of sperm whale communication. We noted that the best place to find sperm whales seemed to be the Azores, a remote but clement archipelago under Portuguese jurisdiction, and located in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. In late spring and early summer, it's one of the few places that pods of sperm whales venture close to shore on a regular basis.

At the time, the ideas expressed about contacting these large brained whales were mostly speculative, and the acoustic tools needed to test the hypothesis about whale language were not yet invented. Today, the maturation of digital audio technology makes our scenario seem much more plausible. Last summer, we started using some of these formerly hypothetical computer tools with belugas on the White Sea.

Last Fall, the distinguished Jazz musician and music producer, Kali Fasteau, contacted Interspecies, asking if she could join one of our cetacean projects in progress. She expressed a willingness to direct some funds into a musical event with the possible objective of recording the sessions. This prompted Nollman to initiate an email forum, eventually comprised of 25 correspondents, with the objective of testing the will to establish a project with sperm whales.

After some discussion, the project actually started to take shape. It would demand a commitment of three weeks each summer for four years. It would be instituted as a community project comprised not only of the usual gang of boat crew, musicians, digital audio programmers, recording engineers, and marine biologists, but interspecies seekers and wild cards as well. Some would fund their own participation. A project manager would help find funding for the rest.

Things come together. This spring Interspecies was given a generous seed grant by Tim Hinkle to fund a scouting trip to the Azores later on this summer. As we go to press, who actually gets to go is not yet decided. Expect a report in next fall's newsletter.

If you'd like to join the forum, email beluga@rockisland.com and tell us what you can contribute to the project. That doesn't necessarily mean money.

The Man Who Talks to Whales

The Art of Interspecies Communication by Jim Nollman, Sentient Publications, 2002

This is a new edition of my own first book, Dolphin Dreamtime. It includes a new chapter entitled "Interspecies Protocol", which was first published in this newsletter. I've also added a new epilogue to discuss my evolving relationship with other species. The new title was the publisher's idea. After so many years, I'm tickled pink that the original drawings have finally been printed with alacrity.

—Jim Nollman

... The search for new ecological metaphors lies at the heart of most nature writing. The case might even be made that unborn generations depend on how willing we are, today, to explore new modes of perceiving nature. In that spirit, regard the metaphor of interspecies protocol, a concept made of equal parts mythos, Gaia, democracy, animal rights, surrealism, politics, and a sense of place.

... Nothing in this book declares that a reader's salvation is at stake unless he or she signs up for a guided dolphin swim program in Florida. And certainly there is nothing that promotes a reader to go find a fancy resort that will allow your kids to pet dolphins. The dolphins don't need human beings impacting their lives. If you love them well you will do nothing besides helping them to prosper. Ironically, you may aid them best by developing some other dreamtime guide. Love the one you're with. Robins, ravens, maple trees. Rocks. Deer. Clouds. You get the idea.